



# National Weather Service Sacramento

## Weather Spotter Checklist

### Things to remember when strong storms are in the area:

1. Make sure you are in a safe place! Your safety is number one and is more important than a real time report. Do not storm chase! In lightning, stay indoors or in a car away from metal/wires. These are the safest locations from lightning, which is one of nature's biggest killers. When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!
2. Observe from indoors when possible. If a tornado is sighted or a Tornado Warning has been issued, seek shelter in the lowest portion of the house, in an interior room away from windows.
3. Moving flood waters can easily pull a person or a vehicle into danger very quickly. Avoid floodwaters and never attempt to drive through water. Turn Around Don't Drown.
4. Wind can bring down large branches and power lines, which can cause injury or death. Seek shelter indoors and away from windows during strong winds.

### If you have observed severe or potential severe weather then:

5. Confirm that the weather conditions are severe or near severe, and could be hazardous to human life and or property. It is not necessary to report lightning unless there are injuries. Consider posting photos and reports on our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/NWSSacramento](http://www.facebook.com/NWSSacramento) or on Twitter at [twitter.com/NWSSacramento](http://twitter.com/NWSSacramento).
6. Collect your thoughts and fill in the blanks on back of this sheet before calling us. Forecasters are likely to be busy and need a quick, clear, concise report.
7. Call our toll-free spotter line: (Number is unlisted and in your spotter package) . This number is for severe reports only. Call public line 916-979-3051 for forecasts.)
8. Give your name & spotter ID#, plus contact information for forecasters to call back quickly, if additional information is needed. If a relayed report, give that person's information as well.

### Examples of good versus bad reports:

**Good** "My name is John Smith, Spotter ID SA100. I'm 1 mile north of Sacramento on Interstate 5. It's 4:00 pm. Hail up to 1" started 10 minutes ago, around 350 PM and is now covering the ground to 3" deep. This is causing cars to spin out on the Interstate."

**Bad** "I'm in Sacramento County. We had some hail and it's looking really bad out here. There's a lot of lightning going on."

The first report tells us concisely and precisely what happened, and when and where exactly it did happen. It provides useful and valuable information for us to warn the public.

### Common Hail Sizes (Diameter)



<Half inch



.75 inch



.88 inch



1.00 inch



1.25 inch



1.75 inch

**Call Spotter Toll-Free Number:** (Number is unlisted and in your spotter package) Call 916-979-3051 if you want a routine forecast. Spotter number is for severe reports only.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, Spotter ID # \_\_\_\_\_,

My location is (distance and direction from a city, a well-known roadway if away from home  
\_\_\_\_\_

Here is my report: At \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm I have spotted (one or more of the following):

- **Tornado:** (funnel extends to the ground, or swirling debris is on the ground below the funnel)  
Direction from your location \_\_\_\_\_, Distance from your location \_\_\_\_\_ miles away, it is estimated to be impacting location \_\_\_\_\_ (town, crossroads, etc.)  
**Touchdown:**
  1. It is on the ground and has been for \_\_\_\_\_ seconds/minutes
  2. It was on the ground for \_\_\_\_\_ seconds/minutes
- **Funnel Cloud:** (funnel not in contact with the ground and no swirling debris under the funnel)  
Direction from your location \_\_\_\_\_, Distance from your location \_\_\_\_\_ miles away
- **Wall Cloud:** (rotating lower cloud in contact with the base of a thunderstorm)  
Direction from your location \_\_\_\_\_, Distance from your location \_\_\_\_\_ miles away
- **Winds:** Direction \_\_\_\_\_ **Strength:** Measured at \_\_\_\_\_ mph, or, Estimated at \_\_\_\_\_ mph  
Damage? (Yes or no)  
Size of trees or branches down \_\_\_\_\_ inches/feet  
Power lines down (Yes or no)
- **Hail:** Size of largest hailstones \_\_\_\_\_ (measure in inches, or compared to coins or other objects:  
Don't use marble size)  
Is hail covering the ground? (Yes or no)  
If so, how deep (measure with ruler or estimate)  
Impacts to travel on nearby roads, or damage? (Yes or no)  
If yes, list impacts \_\_\_\_\_
- **Flooding:** (Fill in applicable lines)
  1. River or creek overtopping or near top of bank \_\_\_\_\_ (name of waterway)
  2. Highway or roadway cross streets impacted \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Water is ponding or flowing (circle one)
  4. Water is rising quickly, slowly, constant, dropping (circle one)
  5. Heavy rain is falling (half an inch or more per hour) and has been measured at \_\_\_\_\_ inches
- **Snow:** (Fill in applicable lines)
  1. Start time \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm. End time \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm.
  2. 24 Hour Total \_\_\_\_\_ inches (as of 8:00/9:00 am if possible)
  3. Storm Total \_\_\_\_\_ inches. Is snow sticking to roadway? Is so, how deep \_\_\_\_\_ inches
  4. Visibility (distance) and/or other impacts of snow on travel on nearby roads \_\_\_\_\_